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Portland, OR 97230

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OREGON OPERATIONS OFFICE

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
805 SW Broadway, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97205

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AUG 31 2016

EPA-REGION 10

RE: Harbor Comments

The pollution in the Willamette River has been there since the shipyards started building the Liberty ships back in the 1940's. We're still dismantling ships today along the Willamette. The dismantling of these ships releases huge amounts of lead paint and other contaminants into the water. Simply dredging the river will not solve the problem. Dredging will actually stir up the sediment and make the problem worse. Truthfully, in order to remove the sediment that contains these pollutants you will have to put it on barges and take it somewhere else. This is the only way to actually get these impurities out of the Willamette. However, doing so will only move the contamination from one place to another. We're still not settling the dilemma; we're just giving it to someone else.

There is no easy fix for this situation and we're never going to get rid of all the contamination. Additionally, the EPA's plan is based on old information. Since their original data was collected in 2004, studies show that the contaminate levels in the Willamette River have actually improved. This restoration was done naturally, much like in 1996 when there was a flood that helped clear some of the pollutants out of the river. This is why I say the EPA should leave the river alone and allow nature to take its course.

Should the EPA go through with its plan, Oregon will have the same problem with this as they did with the pipe job for the sewage. They will spend tons of money on a fix that doesn't help in the long run. Originally, that plan was supposed to tunnel sewage under the Willamette to the North Portland sewage treatment plant. Sadly, all that money was spent and we still have overflows and sewage running into the river. This didn't solve anything. As a matter of fact, it's caused us instead to pollute the water even more.

Oregon taxpayers will be the ones who have to pay for this plan to the tune of millions, or even billions, of dollars. Increasing taxes to complete a project that doesn't guarantee resolution is not a project many will support. When you live on a fixed income like my wife and I, every single dollar counts. I can't wait to get my big \$2.50 Social Security raise next year. That should tell you just how much every penny counts for taxpayers. It costs me \$4,200 a year just to live in my own house, and that doesn't include insurance, the water bill, sewer, or anything else. We just plain don't have the extra money to pay for something that will not fix anything. We have more pressing problems, like the lead present in the drinking water in our homes, schools, and businesses. These are the types of things we should be concentrating on and spending money for.

Sincerely,

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8-28-16

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